

Message Text

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13

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 EB-11 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00

FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

SPC-03 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 SS-15 NSC-10 L-03

H-03 PA-03 PRS-01 USIA-15 DRC-01 /160 W

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R 211025Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 40

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, EAGR, CE

SUBJ: PM'S DECLARES FOOD PRODUCTION WAR

REF COLOMBO 2312 AND 2297

1. BEFORE LARGE GATHERING OF MINISTERS, DEPUTY MINISTERS, MP'S GOVERNMENT AGENTS, ASSISTANT GOVERNMENT AGENTS, AND DIVISIONAL REVENUE OFFICERS HELD IN BANDARANAIKE MEMORIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HALL ON 20 SEPT PM BANDARANAIKE EXHORTED HER AUDIENCE TO BECOME HER "CAPTAINS" IN FULL-SCALE WAR FOR FOOD PRODUCTION. SHE SAID THAT" COUNTRY CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO RELY ON IMPORTED FOOD SUPPLIES; SRI LANKA'S ENTIRE RESOURCES WILL BE TURNED TO FOOD PRODUCTION; BOTTLENECKS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED; SABOTEURS (PRESUMABLY PRIVATE TRADERS CAUGHT HOARDING) WILL BE HOUNDED OUT. SHE CALLED ON EVERY CITIZEN TO CONTRIBUTE EFFORTS TO CULTIVATE EVERY INCH OF BARE LAND AND MAKE FOOD DRIVE SUCCESSFUL.

2. PM'S SPEECH PROVIDES GROUNDWORK FOR ECONOMIC REFORMS REPORTED REFTELS AND IS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT GSL MAY IN FACT PUSH MEASURES THROUGH. MRS B DID NOT, HOWEVER, MENTION ANY SPECIFIC ACTIONS. CRUCIAL PERIOD IS LIKELY TO BE BETWEEN

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28 SEPT MEETING WITH GOVERNMENT PARLIAMENTARY GROUP, AT

WHICH REFORMS WILL REPORTEDLY BE OUTLINED FOR BACKBENCHERS,
AND SCHEDULED OCT 1 PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT NEW ECONOMIC MEASURES.
IN PREVIOUS YEARS, RESISTANCE FROM BACKBENCHERS RESULTED IN
GOVERNMENT'S BACKING AWAY FROM PLANNED DIFFICULT ECONOMIC
STEPS. SUCH PRESSURES ARE LIKELY TO BE ENCOUNTERED AGAIN,
BUT IF SUCCESSFULLY RESISTED AND REFORMS ARE ENACTED
GSL WILL BE TAKING SIGNIFICANT CONCRETE MEASURES TO PUT
AILING ECONOMY ON SOUNDER FOOTING.
VAN HOLLEN

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